

Report of the I-K Synodical Women's Organization of Women of the Evangelical Church in America

Twelve women began their duties as a synodical board at the end of convention on 9/18/2010, representing six of ten clusters (conferences). Priorities included assigning a board partner to each area and filling the one remaining seat. We were successful, with the additional member coming from one of the four non-represented clusters.

Unfortunately, in a matter of weeks, Edie Johnson tendered her resignation for health reasons, leaving us, again, one member short.

Using input gleaned from women at the convention and our own dialogue, we began the process of discerning what God would have us do to make Women of the ELCA a dynamic and vital organization, true to its statement of purpose. We ascertained that any chance at revitalization would hinge on our ability to communicate our mission of discipleship to women who were already active, women who were inactive, and the congregations that housed these women. Following is the work that we have begun:

- **Learning:** We are in the process of revising the unit handbook to combat lack of information and misinformation. Ideally a copy would be made available to each congregation, but financial restraints require us to seek different avenues;

We have separate training events planned for Indianapolis in May and Northeast in September of this year, continuing what was begun last summer;

Greater emphasis is being put on spring cluster gatherings as a time for information-sharing from the synodical expression, and the board partners are being directed to take a greater role in planning this event. Cluster committees have increasingly seen these gatherings as "detached," with board partners as invited "guests" or "spectators."

The abundant and excellent resources from the Churchwide Women's Organization are being encouraged, increasing opportunity for growth, and will be incorporated into our convention.

- **Community and Connection:** Barely half of the congregations in the synod meet the requirements of an active unit, meaning that we are missing what each has to offer to the other. The vice president and I have begun plans for visiting as many cluster gatherings as possible, as well as the women in individual churches.

LDA, through Diane Martin at VU, will be working in partnership with us, seeing this as and Nancy Walter, recipient of the Cronk Scholarship, as part of her deaconess internship, has begun the work of making contact with units, active or not, in conferences 4, 5, 6, and 7, areas that have a high proportion of nonparticipating units.

Cluster partners have been instructed to begin newsletters for their assigned areas, as Northwest has had since 2005. The *KINswoman* is now on a regular quarterly basis, distributed by email and USPS, and Danielle most graciously posts it on the IK Synod website. A Facebook page, with discussion, is now available (IK Women of the ELCA), accommodating intergenerational interaction;

The René Siria Memorial Fund was established at last year's convention in honor our convention chair, who succumbed to cancer nine days before the convention opened, to assist women in attending convention.

At our January meeting, in response to the Haitian tragedy, we chose as our mission focus IK Women for Haiti Earthquake Relief;

Through print and Facebook we help women live out their call for advocacy through increased awareness of human trafficking, domestic violence, and promote special observances and events like Rachel's Day and Healthy Heart Event.

- **Stewardship:** Our budget is modest at just over \$16,000. Allowing for offerings to CWO and Haiti Relief funds, barely more than \$6,000 will be left for operating expenses, meaning board members personally will continue to shoulder many of the financial obligations themselves.

In an effort to be wise stewards for the women of our congregations, we are finalizing plans for our 2011 convention to meet in a church rather than a hotel.

God has been good, supplying enthusiastic and willing workers for his vineyard. We have spent the first few months of our term listening, learning, and responding, open to each other and to God.

We know that strengthening the Women's Organization strengthens the whole church, and we have taken on that challenge. We have embraced this mission, not as a chore, but as an opportunity. Now we go out, anxious to share this joy with our sisters—to "Act boldly on our faith in Jesus Christ," for God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but love, power, and discipline.

In His hands, as His hands,

Dorothy Nevils, President

Phyllis Thompson, Vice President

Barbara Dietz, Secretary

Bonnie Kroening, Treasurer